

September 12, 2013

Thank you for your time, and for holding this hearing. I originally was just going to bring my son Lantz to testify today but on the ride here thought maybe I should testify myself and now, here I am. Please excuse me if my testimony is a bit choppy, I typed it on my iPhone, here, today.

What changed my mind about testifying was the recognition that three Co-ops handling over 70% of California's milk not only recognizes our plight, but are actively testifying on behalf of their member owners. They recognize that the demise of additional member dairy farms is not in their best interest as Co-ops nor in the best interest of the industry as a whole.

About us- We are a small dairy milking 65 cows, with many inefficiencies, that operates as a small family farm that produces all of our own forages with family labor doing many of the milking, feeding & farming operations. In fact, my wife milked the cows before work this morning so my son and I could be here today.

I understand and agree that the California Model of dairying which traditionally meant having a large dairy and buying all or most feed needs is no longer as effective as it used to be.

Since we recognize the inefficiencies of our older small dairy farm, we do everything we can to cut expenses including eliminating all custom operators possible. In fact, when we chop our silage my son drives his own silage truck.

We struggle to survive without bank loans because we, as a family dairy farm, refuse to lose what my dad and grandpa before him worked so hard for. So, my wife's teaching income is, in the short run, continually being used to keep our dairy in operation. That is not a planned business strategy and is not one we can maintain long term.

I also understand the Department's desire to insure that the small cheese operators can continue to operate with the inefficiencies that come with the inability to further process whey into a higher value whey product. Those inefficiencies are similar to the ones that our small dairy operates under on a daily basis as well.

Having said that, I am here today asking you to raise our milk price to reflect the full whey value, not to selfishly protect me and my inefficiencies but rather to support all of my fellow dairy farmers. Paying us full whey value will not save all of us, some of our dairies are already beyond being saved, their fate is already sealed.

I guess one of my biggest frustrations is the fact that the Department's own Cost of Production study correctly illustrates our reality. Realizing that the department recognizes our milk income does not cover our costs of production but then continuing to drag its feet instead of rectifying the problem that the Department has been tasked with which is balancing the needs of the producers, the processors and the public, is very frustrating.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for your time and implore the Department to raise our milk price to reflect the full whey value. As I said earlier, I'm not asking this to be selfish, but rather because this is an emergency and we need it immediately to save our industry.

Thank you.

Rick Adams

AdamsCows Dairy